BHHC-2-1-19

Kenn Rodriguez-News-Bulletin photo

SANDI AND JERRY MARTINEZ established their new window business in their hometown of Belen.

Martinezes offer Clear Choice

QUICK FACTS

Clear Choice Windows of Albuquerque
Where: Located at 302 S. Main in Belen
Telephone: 861-5818

BY KENN RODRIGUEZ
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Ask Sandi and Jerry Martinez of Belen about windows, and you'll leave them knowing more about the subject than you ever thought you could.

That's appropriate, since windows have become a major part of the married couple's lives since they opened their Clear Choice USA franchise in February of this year.

The Belen High School graduates, both 40, began in real estate - both selling and improving homes - with Xpress Professional Real Estate Services at 302 S. Main in Belen, which also houses Clear Choice's office as well as functioning as a warehouse.

"Real estate is what actually brought us to the point where we realized we had to help people improve the value of their homes," said Sandi, who was born in the New York City borough of Brooklyn before moving to Belen at a young age with her family.

While Sandi took care of Xpress, Jerry worked as lead installer for one national firm from 1999 to 2004. A brief stint as lead installer for another Albuquerque company convinced him that there was an alternative for both himself and customers in the Albuquerque metro area.

"He went out to do an install in Edgewood, and the man said to him, 'You better do the best installation you've ever done on a house before,'" Sandi recalled. "And Jerry says 'Why?' The guy said, 'I took a mortgage out on home, I'm paying this company $50,000 to do the job.'"

Sandi said Jerry thought about the $100 per window he got and came to the conclusion that the company was doing a pretty high mark-up.

"We thought 'This poor guy. He kind of got taken,'" she said.

After doing some research, Jerry and Sandi came upon Atlanta-based Clear Choice USA, applied for a franchise and went through the company's screening process and training program.

"My part of the business was a little more difficult because I had never dealt with just windows," Sandi said. "I dealt with the whole home, not just the windows. So that was the big thing there."

The one question was where to locate the company. Clear Choice wanted the duo to base itself out of Albuquerque. But the Martinezes, who both have their entire families in Belen, including their three daughters, Vinessa, Victoria and Veronica, had other ideas.

"We said we're going to locate in Belen," said Jerry, a lifelong resident of the Hub City. "When they asked why we said 'Because that's where our home is.' We have easy access to Albuquerque from here."

The company has taken off in 10 months. Sandi said Clear Choice recently sold its 1000th window and is currently outselling its competitors by a 5-to-1 ratio in Valencia County.

Sandi said the company splits time between individual homes and larger projects, such as the one it just completed for the Bernalillo city housing authority and an upcoming one on the Santa Clara Pueblo just south of Española.

The duo own a large GMC Topkick truck and trailer that has "everything we need in it," according to Sandi, who added that the trailer has its own electricity for jobs on new home sites without it and can carry up to 100 large windows.

Sandi said the company grew in steps, starting from Jerry earning his GB-98 general contractor's license.

"We did it in phases," she said. "We started with an old pick-up truck, and as opportunities made themselves present we took them. In 1997, when Jerry first got contracting license, we never thought we'd have a window company. But we were positioned for each step.

"It was good planning on our part makes an affordable value for the consumer," she said.

anymore. Any reference to success s immediately pushed aside by the 'yes but" language of TV news anchors who, for the most part, conduct Democratic campaign programs rather than "report" the news.

The idea that the war is encouraging the recruitment of "terrorists" has been called, by the Democrats, an awful thing that makes America "less safe." I see it Wilson's scheme to suggest otherwise and discredit the President's decision to liberate Iraq helps to prove, in the minds of some, that Saddam's nuclear ambitions were obvious. Duh!

We can win in Iraq, but victory will be difficult because failure is politically expedient for the Democrats. They are hell bent to win the Congress in November. They don't seem to care much about how they do it or what happens to the country if they do.

Howard Stansell
Los Lunas

Keep those letters shorter, coherent

EDITOR:

Although I dislike being critical, I feel compelled to comment on the excessive use of verbiage in certain letters submitted to the News-Bulletin for publication.

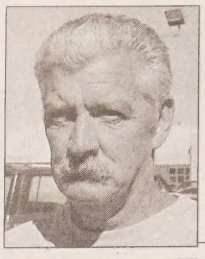
I enjoy reading the opinionated letters, but find it difficult to wade through three or four full columns of fine print to eke out one or two points. As a matter of fact, there are occasions when it is necessary to reread several times to clear the fog and, hopefully, locate the point.

Unfortunately, the "fog count" is most noticeable in letters submitted by the most frequent contributors. In addition to the very high "fog count," much of the material appears to be copied from spin and junk available on the Internet.

I believe the reading skills of many Bulletin subscribers are below college level and, therefore, unable to comprehend the intended message of the verbose writers.

STREETTALK

Q: How do you feel about the news that North Korea now possesses a nuclear device?

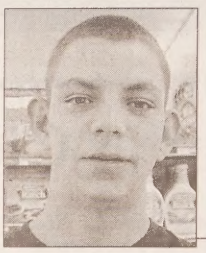


Brad Gordon
Belen

"They (the U.N.) need to go in and do the sanctions and stuff. They say they're going to do it, but I doubt it's going to happen. China is supposed to be in on it, but I don't think the leader of North Korea is going to put up with it, and he doesn't really care."

Terry Torrez
Los Lunas

"It's very worrisome because of the threats of war. The U.N. needs to be more involved with sanctions."



David Fitzsimmons
Belen

"I feel they shouldn't be keeping nuclear bombs from us, they were hiding them from us. ... It's not right. We don't feel safe now because they can just nuclear bomb us whenever they want now."

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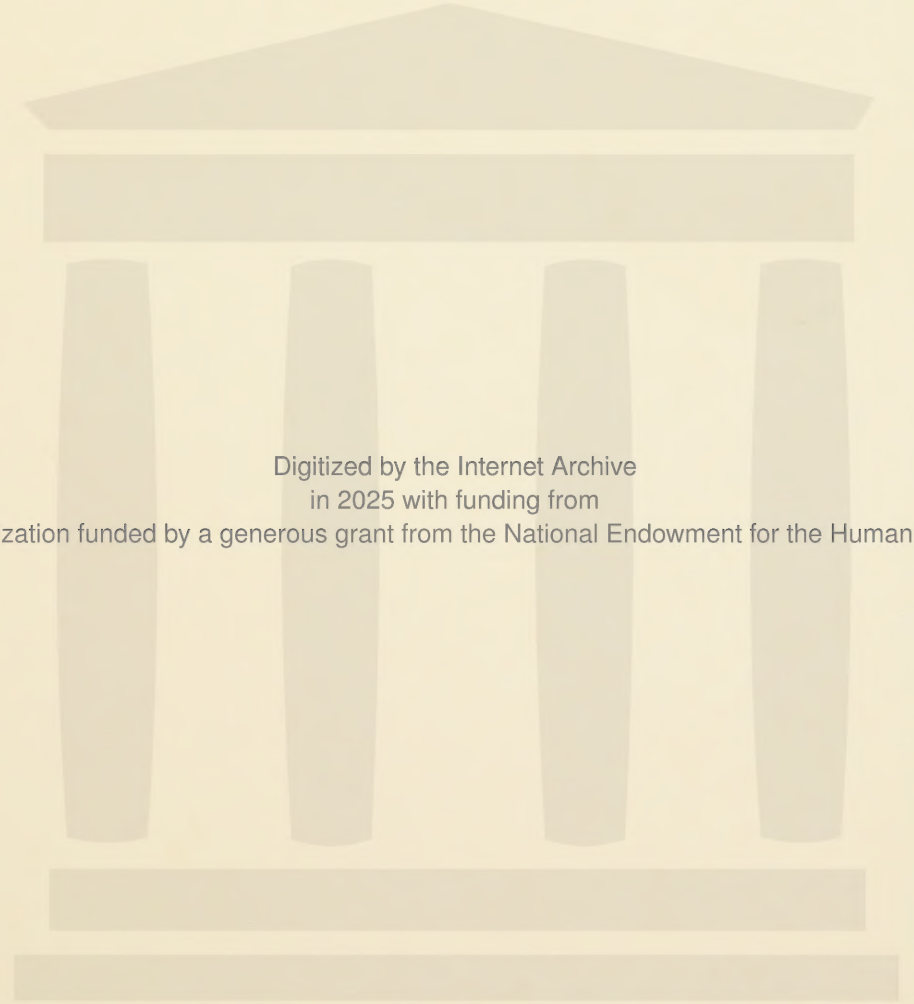

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